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Dist. 20 candidates agree on S. Mtn. Freeway

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Republican state Sen. John Huppenthal and his Democratic opponent, Donna Gratehouse, disagree on many topics, but not when it comes to the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

Both oppose it, although they have different views on finding an alternative.

At a meeting with *The Arizona Republic's* Southeast Valley Editorial Board, they weighed in with their views on that topic.

Huppenthal called the proposed route of the freeway along Pecos Road in Ahwatukee Foothills untenable but said residents should continue to be involved in the planning of that freeway, adopting a mitigation and integration approach.

He said residents should have their objections to the project included in the upcoming environmental impact statement by the Arizona Department of Transportation.

"That doesn't stop the community from saying it's unacceptable, but those objections should be included in the environmental impact statement," he said.

Huppenthal said his experience with the Santan Freeway project through Chandler, where he lives, would be beneficial with grappling over the current project.

Gratehouse said the freeway would have a negative impact on the Ahwatukee area.

"I think it will wreak havoc on the community and there's the danger that it will damage the South Mountain Preserve," said Gratehouse, who lives in Ahwatukee. "This issue speaks to the need of the state to not allow developers to be in charge of long-range planning."

Gratehouse said she wanted to see a more multimodal approach applied to transportation issues so freeways are not always the sole solution. She advocates light rail and other ways.

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